

A COMPARISON OF PERSONAL ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES TO "SOLUTIONS"

PROPOSED FOR PROBLEMS INVOLVING PREMARITAL SEX:

A STUDY OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

A THESIS

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D E D I C A T I O N

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO MY FAMILY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Atlanta University School of Social Work has a two year educational program for the training of social workers. A part of this program is focused on the development of the professional self.¹ This aspect of professional development is a continuous process--one that continues long after the student completes his social work education. However, at the end of the student's training he is expected to have reached a certain level in his professional development--a level of competency that would enable him to work effectively with persons that request help with various types of problems. The particular concern of this study is the student social worker's attitudes toward persons with problems involving premarital sex relations. Would the students of Atlanta University School of Social Work allow their personal attitudes to influence their professional relationship to clients with problems involving premarital sex? More specifically, do their personal biases and opinions tend to be similar to the type of "solutions" they might suggest to clients asking for counseling regarding problems involving premarital sex? This

¹Atlanta University School of Social Work, The Field Instruction Manual, (Atlanta, Georgia: Atlanta University, 1966), p. 12.

study will attempt to answer this question.

Basic Assumptions

The basic assumptions for this study are as follows:

1. Students with favorable attitudes will suggest proportionately more liberal solutions than students with unfavorable attitudes.
2. Regardless of the students favorableness or unfavorableness, they will tend to suggest a preponderance of solutions to problems involving premarital sex that are similar to their personal attitudes.
3. Regardless of attitudes, students will suggest a preponderance of moderate solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations.
4. A proportionately greater percentage of first year students, regardless of attitudes, will suggest liberal solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations than second year students.
5. Second year students will tend to suggest a proportionately higher percentage of moderate solutions, regardless of attitudes, than first year students.
6. Married students will tend to suggest a proportionately greater percentage of conservative solutions than single students.
7. Male students will tend to suggest a proportionately greater percentage of liberal solutions, regardless of their attitudes, than female students.

Significance of the Study

Social workers have to deal with a variety of problems. These problems are usually related to some unmet need--economic, medical, educational, recreational--which hampers or undermines a person's adequate living. Or it may be one of stress--psychological, social, physical--which causes the person to be ineffective or disturbed in

carrying his social roles.¹ The social worker's role in helping people with various types of problems will vary accordingly; however, there are some basic principles and techniques that are used in the profession of social work. For example, the social worker is expected to maintain a non-judgmental attitude--an attitude that would convey acceptance of the individual's rights to his own feelings and beliefs. Robert Harper describes this attitude as a neutral one.² Other authors, such as Bertha Reynolds, feel that the social worker should view people and their feelings as neither good nor bad to our professional eyes.³ We have a professional responsibility to be consciously aware of our feelings as they may relate to clientele in order to facilitate a better helping process--a process that is not damaged by the worker's biases and personal opinions. This does not mean that the social worker should be cold or distant, unaffected by the person, but that he has a responsibility to relate to the person in an understanding and meaningful manner. In other words, the social worker has a professional responsibility to maintain a disciplined control of his attitudes and behavior.⁴

¹Helen Pearlman, Casework: A Problem Solving Process (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 28.

²Robert Harper, "Premarital Sex Relations: The Facts and the Counselor's Role in Relation to the Facts," Marriage and Family Living, XIV (August, 1952), 237.

³Bertha C. Reynolds, Learning and Teaching in the Practice of Social Work (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1942), p. 257.

⁴Frances H. Scherz, "Family Interaction: Some Problems and Implications for Casework," in Ego-Oriented Casework: Problems and Perspectives, ed. by Howard J. Parad and Roger Miller (New York: Family Service of America, 1963), p. 137.

Disciplined control involves the conscious assessment and laying aside of those feelings that have no helping value in the relationship between client and worker. This type of control is usually brought about through supervision. Within the supervisory conferences the worker may be helped not only to identify his subjective involvement but by the expression and discussion of his feelings, he seeks to dilute their intensity, to separate them from the social work purpose, and to subject them to restraint.¹

Often students tend to find the development of the professional self somewhat difficult. Some of the influencing factors are: (1) resistance to changes in personality; (2) confusing the development of the professional self with being apathetic; and (3) distorted understanding of problems and situations because of personal biases and opinions.

Students usually go through a process of learning how to relate professionally to people. This process usually extends over a two-year period, depending on the requirements of the school that the student attends. However, at the end of the student's training, this aspect of professional growth is often incomplete. Therefore, this learning process continues long after he graduates from school.

The focus of this research study, as indicated previously, is to compare personal attitudes of social work students at Atlanta University School of Social Work with responses to "solutions" proposed for problems involving premarital sex. The rationale for using premarital sex problems as the problem focus is related to the increasing concern

¹Pearlman, op. cit., p. 80.

for this phenomena in American society (see Bibliography). Therefore, the researcher felt it would be significant to study social work students, since many of them will soon be professional social workers. Also, they will probably have to work with persons who have problems involving premarital sex relations.

The researcher also feels that to study the attitudes and responses of Atlanta University School of Social Work students is significant, in that a study of this type would reveal how the students feel about premarital sex relations and the way they would probably respond to persons with problems involving premarital sex relations. Moreover, this study would not only add to the research previously done on the subject of sex, but it will reveal how student social workers in particular feel about it, and the way they respond to it as pre-professionals. Furthermore, this study attempts to lessen the gap in social work research for more studies dealing specifically with how the student social worker feels about a problem, and the way he relates to it if he feels a certain way about it.

This is a pilot study, consequently, it is hoped that this study will lead to future research on the social worker's involvement with such a mounting problem as premarital sex relations.

Definition of Terms

1. Attitude - refers to the feelings and beliefs one has towards a person, group, object and an idea.¹

¹Claire Sellitz, et al. Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 146.

2. Conservative - refers to a person who tends to oppose premarital sex relations.
3. Moderate - refers to a person who is generally neither favorable nor opposed to premarital sex relations.
4. Premarital Sex Relation - sexual intercourse between male and female prior to union by marriage.
5. Liberal - refers to a person who tends to advocate premarital sex relations.
6. Professional Self - refers to the ability to know one's strengths and weaknesses in regard to the profession. Also, it entails being consciously aware of personal biases and opinions,

Review of Related Literature

As far as the researcher can ascertain, there are very few, if any, studies exactly like this one; however, there are several studies which deal with aspects of the present study. The major differences between this study and other studies are the population used and the problem focus. In reviewing the literature the researcher found that most of the related studies were focused on attitudes about sex relations in general and not specifically premarital sex relations as is the problem focus of this study. Also, these studies were generally concerned with attitudes of teenagers and college students, and not specifically pre-professional social work students as is the population focus of this study.

Another difference between this study and other partially related studies is its purpose. This study not only seeks to ascertain attitudes of social work students about premarital sex, but it also seeks to ascertain if there is any similarity between attitudes and responses. Other studies do not attempt this twofold purpose. However, they do,

sometimes, compare attitudes with behavior practices. For example, Kinsey conducted two surveys on the subject of sex. In his first study, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male,¹ Kinsey gathered information pertaining to both sexual attitudes and behavior practices. The study that later followed this one by Kinsey had the same purpose, that is, to ascertain attitudes and gather data about sexual behavior.² The latter study, however, was conducted on females.

The findings of the two Kinsey studies indicated that most of the respondents had liberal attitudes about premarital sex relations. Also, 50 per cent of the females had engaged in premarital coitus and from 68 per cent to 98 per cent of the college males had engaged in premarital coitus.

Lester A. Kirkendall's study, Premarital Intercourse and Interpersonal Relationships, revealed that there are some changes that take place in a relationship between male and female after they have had premarital intercourse.³ Some of the changes Kirkendall found are:

(1) Girls much more frequently than boys became more attached to their sexual partner than their partner was to them; (2) Possible pregnancy raised jointly by sexual partners as a subject of conversation increased sharply after intercourse had occurred; and (3) The capacity of couples

¹A. C. Kinsey, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Philadelphia, Penn.: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), p. 458.

²A. C. Kinsey, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (Philadelphia, Penn.: W. B. Saunders Company, 1953), p. 395.

³Lester A. Kirkendall, Premarital Intercourse and Interpersonal Relationships (New York: Julian Press, Inc., 1961), p. 200.

to communicate concerning their sexual relationships, whether before or after intercourse occurred, grew with the intensity of the emotional attachment in the total population.

Ruth McDowell's thesis, "Beliefs About Sex Among College Women and the Source of Their Information,"¹ was a study conducted to determine attitudes of the female respondents and the source of their information regarding sex. McDowell's study is somewhat similar to the present one, in that a comparison is made between attitudes about sex and source of information about sex. The present researcher compares attitudes and responses.

Most of the aforementioned studies pertained to attitudes and sexual behavioral practices. The following studies, however, are mostly related to societal standards. The purpose of these studies are mainly to ascertain whether or not America's sex standards are changing. That is, are the people adhering to what is expected of them in their particular social milieu. For example, a study was conducted at Indiana University to ascertain if the students felt that sexual mores were changing.² The results were that none of the students felt that they know or could define exactly to what degree sexual mores have changed, because in the past they were not discussed honestly enough to provide a comparison.

¹Ruth McDowell, "Beliefs About Sex Among College Women and the Source of Their Information," (unpublished M. A. Thesis, Atlanta University, 1949), p. 12.

²"Campus Report: Who Says College Kids Have Changed?" Life, May 19, 1967, pp. 94-98.

Ira Reiss' book, Premarital Sexual Standards in America,¹ contained some very provocative conclusions. Among them were the following:

(1) Sexual behavior is a constant process and one which has high potentialities for maintaining or disrupting the existing social organization; (2) The great increases in sexual behavior are not just violations of belief, but are predominantly signs of the new sexual standards which are emerging; and (3) The author makes the distinction between patterns of sexual behavior and sexual standards, thus alerting us to what cultural standards accompany what societal behavior patterns.

A more recent study conducted by Reiss seems to indicate that America's sexual standards are not changing at a revolutionary rate, but that the greater change is in sexual attitudes.² In other words, Reiss found that attitudes and behavior are coming closer together. The gap between the two is lessening. Attitudes and behavior practices are becoming very much similar, and the greater changes as indicated by Reiss' study is in attitudes and not in behavior patterns.

Nevitt Stanford's study, "Morals on the Campus," supports the above conclusion by Reiss that there has not been a revolutionary change in sexual behavior patterns. The findings of this study revealed that male participation was not much higher than female participation. Also,

¹Ira L. Reiss, Premarital Sexual Standards in America, (Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), p. 253.

²Ira L. Reiss, "How and Why America's Sex Standards Are Changing," Trans-action, March, 1968, pp. 28-32.

³Nevitt Sanford, "Morals on the Campus," NEA Journal, LIV (April, 1965), 20.

it was revealed that most of those persons engaging in premarital sex relations were either engaged to be married or involved in a serious relationship they believe to be durable.

As previously stated, the above studies were related only in the sense that certain aspects of the present study were mentioned, e.g., attitudes about premarital sex relations, and how they may influence the worker-client relationship.

Scope and Limitations

This study has been limited to Atlanta University School of Social Work students enrolled for the 1967-68 school year. The researcher recognizes that the study is limited to one school of social work, and that one cannot, therefore, generalize from the data gathered and the results obtained that all students in schools of social work in the United States will respond the same way under similar circumstances.

Method of Investigation

This is an exploratory study of personal attitudes and responses to 'solutions' proposed for problems involving premarital sex. The population studied includes first and second year students of Atlanta University School of Social Work, both full and part-time who were enrolled for the school year 1967-68.

The research tool used was the inquiry form.¹ The particular type of inquiry form used was the questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered in one of the school's classrooms, and was collected as each

¹John Best, Research in Education (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1959), p. 64.

student completed it. To insure the anonymity of their responses, the students were not required to sign their names to the questionnaire.

The design included three sections. First, the Likert Scale was used, whereby the respondents rated a statement in one of the following five categories: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. Each of these categories was weighted numerically by the researcher. Second, closed form questions were used, whereby the respondents were given a choice of answers to choose from. Third, demographic information was requested, e.g., questions about race, sex, age, and school status.

Each statement was assigned a scale value. The responses to statements suggesting approval were scored:

	<u>Scale Value</u>
a. Strongly Agree	5
b. Agree	4
c. Undecided	3
d. Disagree	2
e. Strongly Disagree	1

For responses to statements suggesting disapproval they were scored in the opposite order:

	<u>Scale Value</u>
a. Strongly Agree	1
b. Agree	2
c. Undecided	3
d. Disagree	4
e. Strongly Disagree	5

This section of the questionnaire contained 16 statements, however, one statement was eliminated in the final analysis, because few respondents understood its meaning, or attempted to respond to it. The statement was number four on the research instrument (see Appendix). Therefore,

the highest possible score that a respondent could obtain was changed because of this deletion to 75 instead of the original expected score of 80. The lowest possible score that the respondent could obtain was changed for the same reasons to 15.

On the basis of the data obtained from the first section of the research instrument, students were arbitrarily categorized according to their favorableness or unfavorableness. Scores for these categories fell either above or below 54, with the larger numbers falling into the favorable category and the lower numbers in the unfavorable category. These responses were cross tabulated with responses to proposed solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations indicated by respondents in the second section of the research instrument. The controlling variables were social work method, class status, race, age, sex, religion and work experience.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

Questionnaires were administered to 82 Atlanta University School of Social Work students, both first and second year, full and part-time. This sample represented 80 per cent of the students enrolled for the school year 1967-68. A further breakdown of the population includes: (1) 22 males and 60 females; (2) 37 first year students and 45 second year students; (3) 32 single students and 50 married students; and (4) 54 casework students, 17 community organization students, and 11 group work students. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not Atlanta University School of Social Work students would suggest "solutions," to problems involving premarital sex that were similar to their personal attitudes.

The resulting data are presented quantitatively. Therefore, the attitudes and responses were treated statistically, and are presented, analyzed and interpreted in the tables and discussion that follows.

Attitudes of all students were categorized into two groups--favorable attitudes and unfavorable attitudes. There were 38 students in the first category and 44 in the latter category. Arbitrarily, the researcher divided the scores on the first half of the research instrument into two categories using 54 as the score on which all other scores either fell below or above. After the respondents were categorized into the

above two groups, their responses to the second section of the research instrument were categorized into three groups: liberal, moderate and conservative. The responses to the second section of the research instrument were cross tabulated to provide a comparison between those students in either the favorable category or the unfavorable attitude category.

This section of the thesis presents the findings as they relate to each basic assumption. Each assumption is discussed individually, with the findings for it presented along with an interpretation of them.

1. Students with favorable attitudes will suggest proportionately more liberal solutions than those students with unfavorable attitudes.
2. Regardless of the students favorableness or unfavorableness, they will tend to suggest a preponderance of solutions to problems involving premarital sex that are similar to their personal attitudes.
3. Regardless of attitudes, students will suggest a preponderance of moderate solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations.
4. A proportionately greater percentage of first year students, regardless of attitudes, will suggest liberal solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations than second year students.
5. Second year students will tend to suggest a proportionately higher percentage of moderate solutions, regardless of attitudes, than first year students.
6. Married students will tend to suggest a proportionately greater percentage of conservative solutions than single students.
7. Male students will tend to suggest a proportionately greater percentage of liberal solutions, regardless of their attitudes, than female students.

Population Surveyed

Table 1 summarizes and presents the number and percentage of respondents in each of the attitudinal categories. Of those respondents

having favorable attitudes, 45 per cent suggested moderate solutions to problems involving premarital sex, 42 per cent suggested liberal solutions, and 13 per cent suggested conservative solutions. Of those respondents in the unfavorable category, 36 per cent suggested liberal solutions to problems involving premarital sex, 41 per cent suggested moderate solutions, and 23 per cent suggested conservative solutions. These findings indicate that regardless of personal attitudes, the greatest percentage of students (43 per cent) suggested moderated solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations. A smaller percentage of the respondents, 38 per cent, suggested liberal solutions. As was expected, however, the percentage of students with favorable attitudes who gave liberal responses was greater than that for students with unfavorable attitudes. But, for those students with unfavorable attitudes, proportionately fewer indicated conservative solutions than indicated liberal solutions. Their responses, i.e., of those with unfavorable attitudes, were mostly moderate to liberal, with the moderate responses predominating. It appears that their responses varied according to the cases involved, for their attitudes did not closely approximate their solutions suggested for problems involving premarital sex relations.

However, this same conclusion cannot be inferred from the responses of those social work students with favorable attitudes towards premarital sex relations. Respondents with favorable attitudes suggested a greater percentage of moderate solutions, but on the other hand they suggested proportionately fewer liberal solutions. Therefore, a similarity between attitudes and responses is indicated by these findings.

TABLE 1

ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Solutions	Attitudes					
	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	16	42	16	36	32	38
Moderate	17	45	18	41	35	43
Conservative	5	13	10	23	15	19
Total	38	100	44	100	82	100

Only 19 per cent of the students, regardless of the favorableness or unfavorableness of their attitudes, suggested conservative solutions. This finding indicates that no matter what the students' personal attitudes about premarital sex were, very few suggested conservative solutions. They tended to suggest liberal or moderate solutions. This is clearly indicated by the findings of this study.

Educational Status

There were 37 first year students surveyed. They responded in the following manner, regardless of their attitudes towards premarital sex: 43 per cent suggested liberal solutions, 41 per cent suggested moderate solutions, and 16 per cent suggested conservative solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations. These findings appear to bear out the assumption that a preponderance of first year students, regardless of attitudes, will suggest liberal solutions to problems involving premarital sex. (See Table 2).

TABLE 2

ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

Solutions	Attitudes					
	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	7	39	9	47	16	43
Moderate	8	44	7	37	15	41
Conservative	3	17	3	16	6	16
Total	18	100	19	100	37	100

The above data, however, refute the assumption made that those students in the unfavorable attitude category would suggest proportionately fewer liberal solutions than would the respondents in the favorable attitude category. Students with unfavorable attitudes suggested a higher proportion of liberal solutions than students with favorable attitudes. This was contrary to what would be expected of first year students with favorable attitudes.

Second year students suggested proportionately fewer liberal solutions, regardless of attitudes, than first year students. Second year students mostly suggested moderate solutions, which is in accord with the assumption that they would tend to suggest proportionately more moderate solutions than would first year students. (See Table 3).

The findings for the second year students in regard to the assumption that a preponderance of solutions suggested would be similar to the attitudes of the respondents, whether favorable or unfavorable was confirmed

that 50 per cent of the respondents with favorable attitudes gave liberal solutions, definitely indicating a similarity between responses and attitudes. However, the responses for respondents with unfavorable attitudes do not closely approximate their attitudes. Persons with unfavorable attitudes gave proportionately fewer conservative responses than respondents with favorable attitudes who tended to give liberal responses. Therefore it appears that the percentage of conservative solutions suggested, regardless of the respondents' attitudes, were usually lower than the percentage of moderate and liberal solutions suggested by respondents. This finding is indicated throughout this study.

TABLE 3
ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES OF SECOND YEAR STUDENTS

Solutions	Attitudes					
	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	10	50	7	28	17	38
Moderate	8	40	11	44	19	42
Conservative	2	10	7	28	9	20
Total	20	100	25	100	45	100

As it appears, personal attitudes may have been a very strong influencing factor even though the findings of this study do not conclusively indicate as much. At least half of the respondents with favorable attitudes suggested liberal solutions, which indicates that solutions

were generally suggested on the basis of attitudes previously felt about the problem focus of this study.

Marital Status

An analysis of attitudes and responses in regard to marital status was revealing (see Table 4 and 5). There were 32 single students surveyed and 50 married students¹ surveyed. Single students' responses were as follows: (1) 53 per cent of the single students suggested moderate solutions; 34 per cent suggested liberal solutions; and (3) 13 per cent suggested conservative solutions. Therefore, we see that for the total number of single students, regardless of attitudes, most of them suggested moderate solutions.

TABLE 4
ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES OF SINGLE STUDENTS

Solutions	Attitudes					
	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	7	44	4	25	11	34
Moderate	7	44	10	63	17	53
Conservative	2	12	2	12	4	13
Total	16	100	16	100	32	100

¹Includes widowed, divorced, and separated respondents.

Still further consideration of single students indicated that these students with favorable attitudes suggested proportionately more favorable solutions than those students with unfavorable attitudes. However, most of the respondents with unfavorable attitudes suggested a greater percentage of moderate solutions than those respondents with favorable attitudes. But, in terms of conservative solutions suggested, the percentage was approximately the same for both categories.

Single students with favorable attitudes were evenly distributed in terms of the kinds of solutions suggested, e.g., 44 per cent of the respondents with favorable attitudes gave liberal solutions, and 44 per cent gave moderate solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations. Therefore, it appears that those single students with favorable attitudes suggested solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations that were similar to their personal attitudes. As to the rightness or wrongness of suggesting solutions that are similar to personal attitudes, the researcher cannot judge; however, the researcher can postulate that similarity of attitudes and responses, even though hypothetical problem situations were used, does indicate a somewhat subjective or biased response.

The percentage of married students, regardless of their personal attitudes towards premarital sex, indicating liberal solutions was greater than that for single students (see Table 4 & 5). However, married students suggested a greater percentage of moderate solutions than single students. The difference in the percentage of moderate solutions suggested by married and single students was 19 per cent.

TABLE 5

ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES OF MARRIED STUDENTS

Solutions	Attitudes					
	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	10	45	12	43	22	44
Moderate	9	41	8	29	17	34
Conservative	3	14	8	29	11	22
Total	22	100	28	100	50	100

There were more liberal solutions suggested by married students with favorable attitudes than by students with unfavorable attitudes. Also, there were proportionately more moderate solutions suggested by respondents with favorable attitudes than by respondents with unfavorable attitudes. However, there were proportionately more conservative solutions suggested by married respondents with unfavorable attitudes than by married respondents with favorable attitudes. Therefore, these findings appear to confirm the assumption that regardless of the students' attitudes towards premarital sex, they will tend to suggest a preponderance of solutions for problems involving premarital sex that are similar to their personal attitudes.

Sex

The male population, regardless of personal attitudes towards premarital sex relations, tended to suggest liberal solutions to problems

involving premarital sex. In fact, 50 per cent of the solutions suggested by male respondents were liberal. The only percentage of liberal solutions suggested, regardless of attitudes, that was greater than the percentage of liberal solutions suggested by the male respondents was the percentage of liberal solutions suggested by community organization students. Most of the students in community organization are males, therefore, a similarity between the two categories would be expected for this reason.

TABLE 6
ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES OF MALE RESPONDENTS

Solutions	Attitudes					
	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	6	60	5	42	11	50
Moderate	2	20	4	33	6	27
Conservative	2	20	3	25	5	23
Total	10	100	12	100	22	100

Male respondents with favorable attitudes suggested a greater percentage of liberal solutions than male respondents with unfavorable attitudes. However, male respondents with unfavorable attitudes suggested a greater percentage of moderate and conservative solutions than male respondents with favorable attitudes (see Table 6). Consequently, these findings indicate that the male students, especially those with favorable

attitudes towards premarital sex, tended to suggest solutions that were similar to their personal attitudes. In other words, their responses tended to be based on their personal attitudes, therefore, the solutions they suggested were probably subjective.

Forty-seven per cent of the female respondents suggested moderate solutions, 37 per cent suggested liberal solutions, and 17 per cent suggested conservative solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations. Therefore, female respondents suggested a greater percentage of moderate solutions than males (see Tables 6 and 7). Also, male respondents suggested a greater percentage of liberal solutions than females. These findings indicate that males tended to suggest liberal solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations, and females tended to suggest moderate solutions, regardless of their personal attitudes towards premarital sex relations.

TABLE 7
ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES OF FEMALE RESPONDENTS

Solutions	Attitudes					
	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	11	39	11	34	22	37
Moderate	14	50	14	44	28	47
Conservative	3	11	7	22	10	17
Total	28	100	32	100	60	100

Still further consideration of the male and female respondents, the researcher finds that the male respondents, whose attitudes were favorable, 60 per cent of the solutions they suggested were liberal. Therefore, the possibility of personal feelings having a strong influence on the type of solutions suggested was very strongly indicated by the male population. Female respondents, on the other hand, tended to suggest a preponderance of moderate solutions--solutions that were basically an approach that placed most of the responsibility for making a decision up to the client (see Appendix). In other words, the females tended to suggest more of a passive solution than did the male respondents, who tended to be assertive in regard to how they felt about problems involving premarital sex relations. Surprisingly, the female respondents suggested proportionately fewer conservative solutions than male respondents. Therefore, these findings indicate that the percentage of liberal and conservative responses given by male respondents were greater than the percentage of liberal responses given by female respondents.

Treatment Modality

Treatment modality or social work method represents various treatment methods used in the social work profession. Here, treatment modality refers to casework, group work and community organization students.

Most of the casework and group work students suggested moderate solutions, (see Table 8 and 9) whereas, most of the community organization students suggested liberal solutions to problems involving premarital sex. In fact, the percentage of liberal solutions suggested by community organization students was almost double that for casework and group work students. These findings may be related to the fact that community organization

students are mostly males, whereas, most of the casework students are females. Therefore, if male students suggested a high percentage of liberal solutions, then community organization students would tend to suggest a high percentage of liberal solutions to problems involving pre-marital sex. Also, the researcher would like to note that the strongest indication of personal attitudes being similar to solutions suggested was indicated by the responses of the community organization students, e.g. 70 per cent of those community organization respondents who had favorable attitudes suggested liberal solutions.

TABLE 8

ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES OF CASEWORK STUDENTS

Solutions	Attitudes					
	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	8	35	10	32	18	33
Moderate	11	48	13	42	24	45
Conservative	4	17	8	26	12	22
Total	23	100	31	100	54	100

Work Experience

Findings in regard to work experience are summarized and presented in Table 11. This aspect of the study will not be elaborated upon, except to say that no significant findings are observed.

TABLE 9

ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES
OF GROUP WORK STUDENTS

Attitudes						
Solutions	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	2	40	2	33	4	36
Moderate	2	40	4	67	6	55
Conservative	1	20	-	-	1	9
Total	5	100	6	100	11	100

TABLE 10

ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES OF COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATION STUDENTS

Attitudes						
Solutions	Favorable		Unfavorable		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	7	70	3	43	10	59
Moderate	3	30	2	27	5	29
Conservative	-	-	2	27	2	12
Total	10	100	7	101	17	100

TABLE 11

ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES ACCORDING TO WORK EXPERIENCE

Solutions	ATTITUDES													
	Favorable							Unfavorable						
	No Experience		1-5 Yrs.		6-25 Yrs.		No Experience		1-5 Yrs.		6-25 Yrs.		Total	
	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage	Num- ber	Per- centage
Liberal	4	36	7	37	5	62	4	31	8	44	4	31	32	38
Moderate	6	55	10	53	1	13	6	46	8	44	4	31	35	43
Conservative	1	9	2	10	2	25	3	23	2	11	5	38	15	19
Total	11		19		8		13		18		13		82	

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Atlanta University School of Social Work students were studied to determine if they would suggest solutions to hypothetical problems involving premarital sex that were similar to their personal attitudes towards premarital sex relations. The findings indicated that for most cases it could not be conclusively stated that the solutions suggested were similar to the respondents' personal attitudes towards people with problems involving premarital sex; however, the findings do indicate a preponderance of responses that were similar to the personal attitudes of the students surveyed. It can, therefore, be stated that personal attitudes seemingly influenced some of the solutions suggested by the respondents.

As it appears from the findings of this study, many of the students are still attempting to develop their professional identity or professional self. They are involved in a process of learning how to relate professionally to persons asking for many types of assistance. They wonder how much of themselves should they give to the client or how much not to give of themselves. They are ambivalent about the use of themselves.

This ambivalence may be related to their fear of being subjective. They want to be as objective as possible; however, as they are involved in the educational process, they learn more and more that their attempts

to be totally objective are practically nil. They soon learn that it is the professional use of self that they are striving to obtain--an involvement with the client, whereby the worker is aware of his own biases and opinions. Therefore, he is better able to use whatever subjective feelings he has in a positive way. And, if his feelings cannot be used positively, then he is, at least, aware of their possible influence on the worker-client relationship. Consequently, with this self-awareness, he is better able to control those feelings that may serve to hinder the worker-client relationship.

Many of the respondents in this study reflected this ambivalence by the solutions they suggested. Most of the students suggested moderate solutions, which indicates that they were probably ambivalent about suggesting solutions to problems involving premarital sex that were similar to their attitudes about premarital sex, in that, to suggest a moderate solution meant that the students placed the responsibility for making a decision up to the client. In other words, they tended to take the easy way out by suggesting moderate solutions. They were probably attempting to be non-judgmental social workers. Therefore, they responded by giving mostly moderate solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations.

Conclusions

The following are some of the conclusions based on the findings of the study:

1. Proportionately more students with favorable attitudes than with unfavorable attitudes tended to suggest liberal solutions.

2. Regardless of the students' attitudes towards premarital sex, they tended to suggest solutions to problems involving premarital sex that were similar to their personal attitudes.
3. Regardless of their attitudes, a preponderance of the students suggested moderate solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations.
4. A preponderance of first year students, regardless of their attitudes, suggested liberal solutions to problems involving premarital sex relations.
5. Without regard to attitudes, second year students suggested a greater percentage of moderate solutions than did first year students.
6. Proportionately more married students than single students suggested conservative solutions.
7. Male students more frequently suggested liberal solutions than do female students.

A P P E N D I X

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I

Directions: The following statements are presented as generalizations and represent opinions rather than facts. As opinions, they are neither right nor wrong, and your agreement or disagreement will be determined largely in terms of your particular experience. Kindly check your position on the statement as it first impresses you. Indicate what you believe, rather than what you think you should believe.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Undecided
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

	a	b	c	d	e
1. Premarital intercourse increases the couple's sense of closeness.					
2. People should be able to control their sexual impulses in much the same manner that they manage their other impulses.					
3. Sexual intercourse is the right of every human being and ought to be freely available.					
4. Conduct which divides people, which creates suspicion, distrust, and an incapacity to work together with trust and understanding, is socially undesirable and immoral.					
"Sex standards and conduct need to be developed and judged in accordance with this statement."					
5. You think less of your friends of the same sex if you know they have had sexual relations before marriage.					
6. Sexual intercourse is not justified except for the purpose of having children.					

a b c d e

7. After engagement, it is all right for a couple to engage in full expression of sex, but not before. _____
8. A woman should not be as free as a man to engage in premarital sex relations. _____
9. Information regarding methods of "Birth Control" should not be available to unmarried people. _____
10. I believe that full sexual relations are acceptable for the male before marriage, when he is engaged. _____
11. If a couple is not married, they should not engage in premarital sexual intercourse. _____
12. Petting is an acceptable form of sexual activity. _____
13. Premarital intercourse is morally wrong and should not be practiced under any circumstances. _____
14. I feel that full sex relations are acceptable for the male when he feels strong affection towards his partner. _____
15. A woman should be as free as a man to engage in premarital sex. _____
16. A result of premarital sexual intercourse may be unplanned pregnancy; therefore one should not have sexual intercourse before marriage. _____

PART II

Directions: Please read the following hypothetical cases and then decide what course of action that comes closest to what you would recommend, if you were the social worker involved. There are no wrong or right answers. Please underline the letter preceding your recommended course of action.

1. Miss Church, a 24 year old DPW recipient and mother of two children

has been threatened with the loss of her monthly benefits if she continues to have men frequently visiting her home.

- a. Be more discrete.
 - b. Discontinue future contacts until she is married.
 - c. Think through the possible effects this has for her and her family.
 - d. Get off welfare and do what she wants to do.
2. Mr. and Mrs. Stone have a 16 year old daughter who has been having premarital sex relations with her steady boy friend. The girl's parents are wondering what they should do about this.
 - a. Prevent their daughter from seeing this fellow in the future.
 - b. Allow her to continue the relationship and educate her to the various birth control methods.
 - c. Suggest that she wait until she is married.
 - d. Have the parents talk this over with their daughter and decide together what should be done about their daughter's behavior.
3. Mr. Temple, a 43 year old divorced schizophrenic patient, has been having an affair with the hospital nurse. Mr. Temple has mixed feelings about this affair. He wonders what he should do.
 - a. End the affair if he finds it to be too anxiety producing for him.
 - b. Think through both sides of such an affair before deciding whether to end or continue it.
 - c. Marry the nurse, if he loves her.
 - d. Continue the affair, but be more discrete.
4. Ann, a 19 year old sophomore, is having difficulty deciding whether she should have premarital sex relations or refrain because of her moral convictions. Her roommate has advised her to go ahead and try it.
 - a. Wait until she is engaged.
 - b. Wait until she is married.
 - c. Go ahead, but be discrete about it.
 - d. Assess the situation and then decide what will probably be best for her under the circumstances.
5. Tom, a 21 year old college graduate is having an affair with a very attractive 40 year old woman, who happens to be his mother's best friend. For the past month Tom has had considerable guilt about this affair. He wonders what he should do about this affair.
 - a. End the affair immediately.
 - b. Continue the affair.
 - c. Wait another month, then end the affair.
 - d. Assess the situation with Tom and allow him to decide what he should do.

6. Mr. Bedford, a divorced 36 year old college professor, is engaged to Joann, a 21 year old coed. They have been having sexual intercourse. Somehow, the president of the college has learned of this affair, and has threatened Mr. Bedford's dismissal. Both Mr. Bedford and Joann have mixed feelings as to what they should do.
 - a. Marry immediately, if possible.
 - b. Be more discrete.
 - c. End the affair.
 - d. Assess the situation with Joann and Mr. Bedford and then allow them to decide what course of action they should take.
7. Paul plans to marry Betty when his divorce becomes final in six months. Betty is skeptical about continuing the affair with him, because she feels that he may not be honest about their future plans.
 - a. End the affair until the divorce is granted.
 - b. Discontinue further sexual contact until they are married.
 - c. Make sure he loves her before continuing the affair.
 - d. Think through the situation and let her decide what is best for her under the circumstances.
8. Margie, a divorced woman of two years, is disturbed about having sexual relations before marriage. She feels that it is morally wrong. However, she feels that her desires need to be satisfied.
 - a. Wait until she remarries.
 - b. Fulfill her needs, but be discrete.
 - c. Wait until she is engaged.
 - d. Think through the situation and then make her decision.
9. John and Sue are engaged. John feels that before he marries Sue he must have sexual intercourse with her. Sue disapproves, mainly for moral and religious reasons.
 - a. Submit to his demands if he really loves her.
 - b. Stick to her convictions--no matter what may happen to the relationship.
 - c. Think through her feelings and decide what will be best for her under the circumstances.
 - d. None of the above. If none of the above, what would you recommend?

10. Miss Lee, a 23 year old social worker, very much wants to have an affair with Bill, a 35 year old married man and father of two children. She has become quite disturbed about this and she wonders what she should do.

- a. Sublimate her desires until she can find a single man to meet them.
 - b. Block this idea from her mind.
 - c. Think through her feelings and decide what will be best for her under the circumstances.
 - d. None of the above. If none of the above, what would you recommend? _____
- _____
- _____

PART III

Directions: Please check or fill in the following blanks as they apply to you.

1. Class Status:

_____ First year _____ Second year _____ Continuing Education

2. Sex:

_____ Male _____ Female

3. Age:

_____ 20-25 _____ 30-39
 _____ 26-29 _____ 40 and over

4. Marital Status:

_____ Single _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Separated

5. Religion:

_____ Protestant _____ Catholic _____ Jewish _____ Other(specify)

6. Race: _____ White _____ Non-white

7. Social Work Method: _____ Casework _____ Group Work _____ Community Organization

8. Work Experience (if any) other than that associated with the school.

_____ Approximate number of years.

THANK YOU !!

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